

## Message Text

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R 301059Z JAN 75  
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AMEMBASSY BEIRUT  
AMEMBASSY CAIRO  
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS  
AMCONSUL JERUSALEM

C O N F I D E N T I A L TEL AVIV 0665

EXDIS

E.O.11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, IS, US, XF

SUBJ: PERES ON ARAB - ISRAELI NEGOTIATING ISSUES

1. SUMMARY: DEFMIN SHIMON PERES REPRESENTS HARD-LINE POSITION WITHIN ISRAELI CABINET ON TERMS OF SECOND STAGE EGYPTAIN-ISRAELI AGREEMENT, AND HIS VIEWS WILL BE HIGHLY INFLUENTIAL IN FORMULATION OF GOI NEGOTIATING POSITION. FOLLOWING ASSESSMENT OF PERS VIEWS ON CURRENT NEGOTIATING ISSUES IS BASED ON HIS PUBLIC STATEMENTS IN RECENT WEEKS, INCLUDING APPEARANCE ON PRIME TIME TELEVISION PANEL SHOW JAN 28, HIS DISCUSSIONS WITH CODELS, AND ASSESSMENTS OF POLITICAL COMMENTATORS. AS A KEY MEMBER OF ISRAELI CABINET, PERES CANNOT OPENLY EXPRESS VIEWS AT VARIANCE WITH ESTABLISHED GOI POLICY BUT HE CAN AND HAS MADE IT CLEAR THAT HE BELIEVES ISRAEL SHOULD DRIVE A HARD BARGAIN IN NEGOTIATIONS WITH EGYPT. END SUMMARY.

2. ISRAELI EGYPTAIN NEGOTIATIONS. AS REGARDS SECOND STAGE AGREEMENT WITH EGYPT, PERES DRAWS GENERAL DISTINCTION BETWEEN "MAJOR" AND MINOR INTERIM SETTLEMENT. PERS BELIEVES THAT EGYPT IS INTERESTED ONLY IN MINOR INTERIM SETTLEMENT, IN EFFECT ANOTHER DISENGAGEMENT AGREEMENT, WITHOUT SIGNIFICANT POLITICAL

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CONTENT. PERES BELIEVES THAT FOR SUCH A SETTLEMENT ISRAEL CONCEIVABLY

COULD WITHDRAW 30 TO 50 KMS BUT SHOULD NOT REPEAT NOT GIVE UP THE PASSES AND ABU RODEIS. FOR A MAJOR SETTLEMENT, INVOLVING SIGNIFICANT EGYPTIAN POLITICAL CONCESSION, PERES HAS SUGGESTED ISRAEL COULD GIVE UP THE PASSES. ABU RODEIS, HOWEVER, SHOULD NOT BE GIVEN UP IN ANY CASE UNLESS ISRAEL'S OIL SUPPLY CAN BE GUARANTEED, PRESUMABLY FROM US.

3. NATURE OF EGYPTIAN POLITICAL CONCESSIONS. ON TV PANEL PROGRAM JAN 28, PERES FREQUENTLY SPELL OUT HIS CONCEPTION OF WHAT MAJOR EGYPTIAN POLITICAL CONCESSION OUGHT TO BE. HE SAID THAT IT WAS UP TO SADAT TO MAKE PROPOSAL WHICH GOI WOULD THEN CONSIDER, ADDING THAT IT WAS FRUITLESS FOR GOI AND USG TO DISCUSS NATURE OF POLITICAL CONCESSION WHILE SADAT REMAINED ON SIDELINES. HE REJECTED IDEA THAT EGYPTIAN AGREEMENT TO ALLOW ISRAELI CARGOES THROUGH SUEZ CANAL COULD CONSTITUTE MAJOR CONCESSION, SINCE THIS WOULD REPRESENT SALE OF SAME POLITICAL MERCHANDISE TWICE (REFERENCE IS TO DISENGAGEMENT AGREEMENT). IN RECENT INTERVIEWS, HOWEVER, PERES HAS SAID THAT MAJOR SETTLEMENT COULD CONCEIVABLY INVOLVE TEN YEAR TIME FRAME, AND THAT BOTH SIDES COULD DEFINE IN ADVANCE NATURE OF CONCESSIONS AT EACH STAGE-- YEAR BY YEAR--DURING TEN-YEAR PERIOD.

4. US/ISRAEL RELATIONS. PERES BELIEVES THAT US/ISRAEL SHOULD HAVE "JOINT STRATEGY" FOR NEXT FIVE YEARS, INCLUDING BROAD AGREEMENT ON GOALS AND TACTICS OF POLITICAL NEGOTIATIONS AND LONG TERM UNDERSTANDING ON MILITARY RESUPPLY. IN IMMEDIATE FUTURE HE BELIEVES THAT ISRAEL HAS CONSIDERABLE MANEUVERING ROOM IN POLITICAL NEGOTIATIONS WITHOUT CAUSING SIGNIFICANT DETERIORATION OF US/ISRAELI RELATIONS. ISRAEL'S AID REQUESTS, HE BELIEVES, ARE NOT BEYOND US CAPABILITIES, PARTICULARLY SINCE ISRAEL IS NOT ASKING EITHER A FORMAL US DEFENSE TREATY OR DIRECT INTERVENTION WITH GROUND FORCES. MOREOVER, PERES DOES NOT BELIEVE THAT US--THE PRESIDENT, CONGRESS OR PUBLIC OPINION--WOULD BE PREPARED TO UNDERWRITE MASSIVE ARMS SUPPLY/ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS FOR ARAB STATES WHICH WOULD BE REQUIRED TO SUPPLANT SOVIETS.

5. WAR PROSPECTS. PERES DOES NOT BELIEVE THAT FAILURE TO ACHIEVE SECOND STAGE EGYPTIN-ISRAELI AGREEMENT NECESSARILY

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MEANS NEW WAR. SYRIA, HOWEVER, CONCEIVABLY COULD DECIDE TO LAUNCH NEW WAR AT TIME OF UNDOF RENEWAL IF NO START HAS BEEN MADE TOWARDS SECOND STAGE SYRIAN-ISRAELI AGREEMENT BY THEN. PERES BELIEVES THAT IDF, AT PRESENT STAGE OF RESUPPLY AND PREPAREDNESS, CONSTITUTES SIGNIFICANT DETERRENT AND THAT ARAB STATES WILL THINK CAREFULLY BEFORE ACTIVATING WAR OPTION.

6. GENEVA CONFERENCE. PERES HAS STATED THAT POSSIBILITY OF

RECONVENING GENEVA CONFERENCE SHOULD NOT DISTURB ISRAEL. IF US STAGED APPROACH COLLAPSES LEADING SOVIETS AND ARABS TO PUSH FOR RENEWAL OF GENEVA CONFERENCE, ISRAEL SHOULD AGREE TO GO. ISRAEL SHOULD NOT BE IN A POSITION OF SEEMING TO REJECT CONFERENCE AND TO BE BLOCKING PEACE PROSPECTS. IN ANY CASE, FACT THAT GENEVA CONFERENCE HAS NOT BEEN RECONVENED IS DUE, HE CLAIMS, TO EGYPTIAN RATHER THAN ISRAELI OBJECTIONS TO IT. SHOULD GENEVA CONFERENCE CONVENE AND FAIL, THIS WOULD NOT NECESSARILY LEAD TO NEW WAR. THERE HAVE BEEN MANY INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCES--E.G. PARIS PEACE TALKS ON RESOLUTION OF VIETNAM CONFLICT--WHICH PROCEEDED OVER MANY SESSIONS BEFORE ACHIEVING SUCCESS.

7. SOVIE-EGYPTIAN RELATIONS. PERS BELIEVES THAT ISRAEL'S INFLUENCE ON EGYPTIAN-SOVIET RELATIONS IS LIMITED. EGYPT WILL MAINTAIN ITS SOVIET CONNECTION FOR ARMS PURCHASES REGARDLESS OF ISRAELI NEGOTIATING POSITIONS. RECENT DEVELOPMENTS IN SOVIET-EGYPTIAN RELATIONS SUCH AS CANCELLATION OF BREZHNEV'S CAIRO VISIT SHOULD NOT BE MISREAD. SADAT CAN AFFORD TO GIVE IMPRESSION OF COOLING OF RELATIONS WITH SOVIETS TO WIN SUPPORT OF US PUBLIC OPINION. IN EFFECT, TIGHT ISRAELI NEGOTIATING POSITION WILL NOT DRIVE EGYPT BACK INTO SOVIET ARMS BECAUSE IT IS THERE ALREADY.

8. COMMENT: RABIN, ALLON AND PERES ARE TODAY THE KEY FIGURES IN GOI DECISION MAKING PROCESS ON FOREIGN POLICY AND SECURITY ISSUES--AS MRS MEIR, DAYAN AND EBAN WERE DURING NEGOTIATION OF EGYPTIAN AND SYRIAN DISENGAGEMENT AGREEMENTS. FROM OUR VIEWPOINT, PERES WILL PROBABLY BE THE HARDEST TO CONVINCE THAT A FURTHER PARTIAL SETTLEMENT IS IN ISRAEL'S INTEREST. BUT ONCE HIS ASSENT IS ACHIEVED, ONE OF MAJOR OBSTACLES ON ISRAELI DOMESTIC POLITICAL SCENE TO RATIFICATION OF AGREEMENT WILL HAVE BEEN OVERCOME. WE BELIEVE THAT PERES

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TO SOME EXTENT WILL BE INFLUENCED BY DAYAN, ATTENTIVE TO THE DANGER OF A RIFT BETWEEN THEM IF THEY DISAGREE ON THE ACCEPTABILITY OF THE PROPOSED AGREEMENT. BUT PERS IS A PRAGMATIST AS WELL AS A HARDLINER. HE HAS SHOWN CONSIDERABLE FLEXIBILITY IN ADJUSTING HIS POSITION TO CHANGING CIRCUMSTANCES. HIS POLITICAL STYLE, WHICH ALMOST ALWAYS INCLUDES CAREFUL QUALIFICATIONS IN THE PRESENTATION OF HIS FORCEFUL POSITIONS,

ALSO PERMITS HIM TO SHIFT GROUND AS THE SITUATION REQUIRES. ON THE ABOVE MENTIONED TV SHOW, HE STRESSED IMPORTANCE OF AVOIDING CONFRONTATION WITH US--A CONSIDERATION OF WHICH DAYAN IS ALSO AWARE. THIS FACTOR, AS WELL AS UNDOUBTED PRESTIGE AND POWER WHICH HAVE ACCRUED TO HIM AS MOD, WILL ALSO HAVE BEARING ON HOW HE PLAYS HIS CARDS IN NEGOTIATING PROCESS AHEAD.

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